

Lanna

by

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The forgotten land of *Lanna* was on the area that is now *Jyangmhaï* and *Jyangraï* in *Daii*. It was to the west of *Lanjāng*, which is now Laos. These two kingdoms were sisters, that is *Lanna* and *Lanjāng*, and so were *Lanna* and *Sukhodai* to the south. This latter was to the south of the former but to the north of *Siam*, which were predated by all the three mentioned. The name *Siam* came from the name *Śrī Āyudhya*, its capital, as 17th century French sources also agree. This makes sense since the latter name after a *sandhi* becomes *Śryayudhya*, pronounced *syayudya*, Sinoised into *Syam* in Chinese, which are exactly the same *Siam* in AB, and AB is grammatically sound.

Lanna has largely been unknown to all historians, partly because it was landlocked, but also because it was childless, in contrast with *Lanjāng* which became *Laō*, and *Sukhodai* which became *Siam* which became *Daii*. Different histories call it by different names, Bowring (1857) as West Laos, while Pinto (d. 1583) as *Jyangmhaï* of his spelling. Over centuries *Siam* had been annexing this northern neighbour to it many times. The first account I came across was when a king of *Siam* successfully and quite easily suppressed an uprising by *Lanna* and *Lanjāng*. But he was away for six months because he also spent some time massacring some of the towns as a revenge for having given these passage. He came back to *Āyudhya* only to find, or rather to remain ignorant of the fact that his wife had committed adultery and no longer wanted him as king. He was conveniently poisoned; and his son became a child king in his stead, who was in turn poisoned by his own mother. An uncle of this child managed to kill both the queen and her lover. Then followed the first Burmese attack on *Siam*. They very soon nearly succeeded with their elephants but for the courage of that uncle. Being far outnumbered he himself opened the city gate for his enemies, and asked first for the gold the king of Burma had promised for doing so. This he was not granted, however, but he could withstand his opponent that day. After that the war drew on until the Burmese heard of a rebellion back home when the siege was then lifted.

This should give us some idea of the comparative strength of these kingdoms then. *Siam* easily won her fight with *Lanna* and *Lanjāng*. Then there were many goodly *Siamese* knights who perished under the hand of their own adulterous queen, yet the strong Burmese could still do nothing with this much reduced strength of *Siam*. But when the former returned to their home in Burma, being outnumbered they defeated the rebels there in no time.

It may be worth mentioning that though the English and the French knew *Lanna* as West Laos, the *Siamese* always called her North *Siam*.

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